

WINNER OF THE KODANSHA MANGA OF THE YEAR AWARD

MU SHI SHI

6

YUKI URUSHIBARA

MU
SHI
SHI

6

YUKI
URUSHIBARA

Deluxe Books

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ムシシイ



A father disappears and his son, a hunter, inherits his father's power to lure animals to their deaths, quietly and ensnared. But this ability poisons the mind and the body. Can mu^{shi} master Genko cure the son before he shares his father's fate, or will the young man turn his deadly powers on his would-be savior?

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MU SHI SHI 6

Yuki Urushibara

Translated and adapted by
William Flanagan

Lettered by
North Market Street Graphics



Ballantine Books • New York

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Mushishi volume 6 is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are the products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.

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-chan: This is used to express endearment, mostly toward girls. It is also used for little boys, pets, and even among lovers. It gives a sense of childish cuteness.

-kun: This is an informal way to refer to a boy, similar to the English terms "kid" and "squirt."

**Sempai/
Senpai:** This title suggests that the addressee is one's senior in a group or organization. It is most often used in a school setting, where underclassmen refer to their upperclassmen as "sempai." It can also be used in the workplace, such as when a newer employee addresses an employee who has seniority in the company.

Kohai: This is the opposite of "sempai" and is used toward underclassmen in school or newcomers in the workplace. It connotes that the addressee is of a lower station.

Sensei: Literally meaning "one who has come before," this title is used for teachers, doctors, or masters of any profession or art.

**Onna-san/
Onii-san:** Normally older siblings are not called by name but rather by the title of older sister (Onna-san) or older brother (Onii-san). Depending on the relationship, -chan or -sama can also be used instead of -san. However, this honorific can also be used with someone unrelated when the relationship resembles that of siblings.

**Obaa-san/
Oji-san:** Japanese grandparents are called by their titles rather than by name. Grandmothers are called Obaasan (or Obaa-sama to imply added respect and distance, or Obaa-chan for more intimacy). Likewise grandfathers are called Ojisan, Oji-sama, or Oji-chan.

-[blank]: This is usually forgotten in these lists, but it is perhaps the most significant difference between Japanese and English. The lack of honorific means that the speaker has permission to address the person in a very intimate way. Usually, only family, spouses, or very close friends have this kind of permission. Known as *yobaiute*, it can be gratifying when someone who has earned the intimacy starts to call one by one's name without an honorific. But when that intimacy hasn't been earned, it can be very insulting.

Honorifics Explained

Throughout the Del Rey Manga books, you will find Japanese honorifics left intact in the translations. For those not familiar with how the Japanese use honorifics and, more important, how they differ from American honorifics, we present this brief overview.

Politeness has always been a critical facet of Japanese culture. Ever since the feudal era, when Japan was a highly stratified society, use of honorifics—which can be defined as polite speech that indicates relationship or status—has played an essential role in the Japanese language. When addressing someone in Japanese, an honorific usually takes the form of a suffix attached to one's name (example: "Asuno-san"), is used as a title at the end of one's name, or appears in place of the name itself (example: "Negi-sensei," or simply "Sensei!").

Honorifics can be expressions of respect or endearment. In the context of manga and anime, honorifics give insight into the nature of the relationship between characters. Many English translations leave out these important honorifics and therefore distort the feel of the original Japanese. Because Japanese honorifics contain nuances that English honorifics lack, it is our policy at Del Rey not to translate them. Here, instead, is a guide to some of the honorifics you may encounter in Del Rey Manga.

-san: This is the most common honorific and is equivalent to Mr., Miss, Ms., or Mrs. It is the all-purpose honorific and can be used in any situation where politeness is required.

-sama: This is one level higher than "-san" and is used to confer great respect.

-dono: This comes from the word "dono," which means "lord." It is an even higher level than "-sama" and confers utmost respect.

-kun: This suffix is used at the end of boys' names to express familiarity or endearment. It is also sometimes used by men among friends, or when addressing someone younger or of a lower station.

蟲

ryū

師

Mushishi

6

Yuki Urushibara



You?

Say,
Fuku...



That's
right.



You're...
... only
scheduled
to work with
us until next
year, right?

I haven't
really
thought
of it...

Will there
be any work
for you in
your home
village?

What
are you
planning for
afterward?



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Heaven's Thread



You've been a great help!

Um... Your name is Fuki, right?

Right.

I'll be sure to find it for you!

My youngest sister's child would never behave, so Fuki was brought in as the baby's nanny.

Every so often, she'd talk about strange things.

In the end...

...I never found the star she was talking about.

But that's why some people of the village shunned her.



Is what you said true?

Hey! You over there!

.....

But I wonder where that star went...

The broom star...the one with the tail.



Sort of meandering one way, then the other.

It would shine, then disappear...

Um... it was headed that way.



Still... If it's true, it'd be a real discovery.

Is there really a comet like that?



Yes, last night...

You mean the broom star?



which way was it going?

Over that way...

what part of the sky?





...around
in the
mountains
with him.

...why I'm
waking.



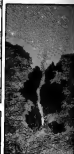
And...

I wonder...



Here.

Drink
some of
this.



You really
should
drink it
and get
yourself
feeling
better.

I can't look
after you
forever.



...up
there?

What's
going
on...



Hm...?



This
man...

Who
is he?



Where...

...am I?

Huh...?



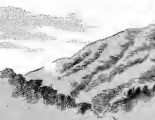
But I'd like to do what I can for you.

I don't know.



And you...

You're going to save me?



.....



Hm...

You seem to have regained a little color.



Yeah. It does that.

Try to bear it.

.....



That's a problem.

Don't you remember anything?



"Normal" ...?



This all happened because you touched it.

See that white thread coming out of your hand?



If you don't do something about it...
...you'll keep getting further and further away from being human.



You see, you...

...look on some of the aspects of a really strong *nushi*, and you're living a very vague existence right now.

It's possible that other people can't even see you.



We're looking for a town.

Where to?

Come on. We're going.



Really?



It will help you get better if you're in a place with a real human smell.

And even if your memory doesn't return, we'll get somebody to look after you.



I guess you can see it pretty well the way you are now.

Yeah.



There's something...

...some light coming from beneath the ground...



But...

...which way is better, huh?



If you want a river of light, look at the one in the sky.



That light is poison to the eyes.

If you get too used to looking at it, you won't be able to see in sunlight anymore.



Wow.

You're right...



That one shines at night.

It's a river bathed in sunlight, and that's how it shines.

Look at that river instead.



...or go around floating in the sky?

When you say mushi...

...you mean those little things that hide in the shadows...

Yeah.

Oh...



It's pretty.

You shouldn't look at it too much.



It seems...

...that the light flow is below us.



Is something glowing?

It's called Kōka. It's what the mushi were before they were born.

It's where they gather to swim in it.



What's wrong...



I slept really well.

The little mistress must have slept all through the night.



Thank goodness.



...have to go back!!



It's almost like it's a reflection...



They look similar, but are very different.

Don't get them mixed up.











And for that reason, they're sometimes called "lost stars."



At night, they meander about looking like stars.

They eat tiny airborne light-bearing mushi, and that's how they live.



I'm...a little envious of you.



You're the same as Fuki?

You could say that.

I'm someone who makes a living through it.



It can look like a thread.

On the rare occasion that there isn't enough food in the sky...

...it will stretch a tentacle close to the ground as a fishing line.



It was headed that way.

It would shine, then disappear... Sort of meandering one way then the other.



These "tensungus" mushi...

...normally look like a balloon with a tail.

They hover in the sky above a special place called the Light Flow.



Fuki is a lucky girl.



She still hasn't...

...completely escaped the influence of that mushi.

But you'd better be careful.





They said...

...that Fuki disappeared into the sky once again.



Ginko-san!



...that letter supposed to mean?!

what was...



...I got a letter from them a little later.



And we'd love it if you could be here for it.

Don't trouble Hime! your sister with me!

Well...
...we'll be having a ceremony in the near future.



I'll stop by again some time soon.

Got it.

But none of this...

...would have happened without you, Ginko-san!



But...



My body
just
floats on
its own!

I'm
sorry!



If he sees
you like
this...

My father
will be
coming in
just a few
moments.



You
understand
me? Just
stay still.

And make
sure you
take your
medicine!



.....



.....
I will.



Now she
gets
blown
into the
air at the
slightest
breeze.

...her
body
seems to
get
lighter
and
lighter.

And as
this
goes
on...



...refuses to
acknowledge
us as a
couple.

As I
might have
guessed,
my father...



...Fuk
feels the
resentment
of people who
think she's a
freeloader.

Day
after
day, as
we try to
reason
with
him...



.....
Fuk!
I'm
bringing
you!
Please
come
down!



And day
after
day...

...it
becomes
more
difficult for
her to come
back to the
ground.



But I don't
know how!





...is your
existence

She's
here by barely
a hair's
breadth, and
the only thing
keeping her
here...



You're
the only
one.



...but
Fuki is
still right
here.



I doubt
you can
see her...



You say
accept,
but...

...how do
I accept
someone
I can't
see or
touch?



If you don't
want her
to vanish
completely,
you're going
to have to
accept her.



That's...

...impos-
sible!





FukL..



...the
oddest
scene ever
played
out in the
village...
...so
everyone
said.



it
was...



So they
don't...

...go
away at
all...



Really?



Really.

You just can't
see them
because the
light of the sun
is so bright.

But they
really are
right up
in the sky
where they
should be.



...they'll
always
be there
in the
sky!



Even if
I don't
see
them...



...the man
look up
residence
on the
outskirts of
the village.

With
time...



But...
...the
time
went
by...

Seiji-
san!



And he still
was there
talking to
an absent
bride for
everyone to
see.

The villagers
eventually
stopped going
near his place.



Now,
Fuji...
...take a
drink.

But even so,
the groom
kept going
through the
motions as if
the bride was
there.



There was
a hastily
arranged
marriage
ceremony...

...and no
one could
see the
bride.



Maybe
like
this...

No...



...whispered
that the
groom had
become as
crazy as the
intended bride
used to be.

And the
people
there
witnessing
it...



On a rainy beach...



...I could hear the faint cries of birds

Well?



...even the villagers came to be able to see Fuki.



...Huh?

It's Fuki! When did she come back?!

Well, isn't that...



And after that...

...Fuki's old habit of vanishing never surfaced again.

Heaven's Thread
The End



The Chirping Shell



Where
can it be
coming
from?

What
the...



...?

From the
ground...

But...

...there
was no
sign of
birds
anywhere.



Ah!
You're looking for shells too?



You live up on that bluff, don't you?



So you can talk after all!













...and hide themselves in shells to wait out the coming disaster.



But when there's a change in the sea, they come up on shore...



...forget how to use their own voices.

People who put the shells up to their ears to hear them...



And they sing constantly with tiny voices.



Is there a way to cure it?



Calling others of their kind up on land.



Is that right?



If she hears people's voices every day, she'll remember on her own.

Don't worry.



Did you hear...



...the song in the shell?



What's the matter with you?

I want to hear you say it!



Others call them Suzuri-kai.

Some call them Yodo-kuridori.



When I say the "song in the shell"...

...what's really singing is a mushi that nests inside of shells.





Prepare? We're already well prepared.



Yeah.

Both of those have been found in the records.

You'd better prepare for it.



if so, I'm glad.



People who go to sea for a living never know what the future will bring.

So we're already as prepared as we can be for whatever happens.

I'm grateful that you wanted to warn us, but it won't be anything special to us.



He tells us not to slip up.

We're only fishing from the pens tomorrow.



Yes, sir!

Hey! Make sure there aren't any slipups tomorrow either!



Well... that's it for me.

The real problem is this disaster.



It's what you get for acting without permission!



If it happens again, I'll never forgive you!



Or that some big storm is coming?

What? You mean a really high tide?

A disaster from the sea?



I'll go tell the people of the village myself.

But you'd better be careful too.

The boss
had his own
wife pulled out
first.

I can't say
that I blame
the guy...

...
I guess,
maybe
so.

But...
...if it were
me, I'd
probably do
the same thing.

He lives
alone with his
daughter up
on the bluff.
They do their
own fishing there.

Directly
after that,
the diver's
husband quit
working for the boss.

So I
understand
how the boss
feels too.

It was right
after that when
the boss came
up with the
fish-farming
idea.

It just
makes
a guy
heart sick.

Hmm...

And
nothing like
that awful
incident will
ever happen
again.

If this
sea-farming
project
goes well, we
fishermen can
make a steady
living.

The boss
thought
long and
hard about
this.

Don't
be like
that.

I like dive
fishing
so much
better!

What
incident
was that?

Awful
incident?

They
weren't able
to pull her
out in
time.

It was
terrible. the
sea ran red
with blood.

Yes...

One of our
lady divers was
eaten while
diving from the
boss's fishing
boat.

It was
about ten
years ago.



Okay.
I understand.



Good...



It isn't
anything
for you to
be worried
about.

You've
done
nothing
wrong.



Daddy!
Welcome
home!

Yeah.

から
かへ



Why
would
he say
that?



But...

He said
she
wasn't
allowed
to talk
to me.

...Nami-
chan's
father
came.



Listen...

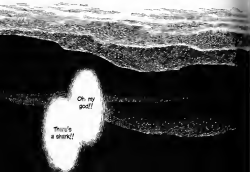
I met
Nami-
chan on
the beach
today.



Daddy
...P



Forgive
me...



Oh, my
god!!

There's
a shark!!





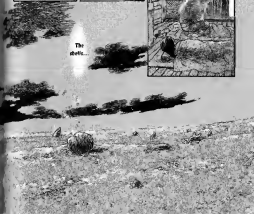
They're
only
growing
in num-
ber.



They
are it to
remember.

They
do it for
their
kind.

...try
out with
their ring
knives.



The
shells...



I'm disappointed, but I also feel sorry for her.

She's been diving all this time in place of her mother.



What is it?



Hm?

Yeah...

That girl's pretty good! And she's still so small!





...has
stopped!

The
song...

I under-
stand.

Just in
case, I'll
evacuate
everyone to
the top of
the bluffs.



It's
a red
tide!!



I've
seen
this
before...



What's
that
glow...?!



Look at
them
all...!!

.....
The
fish...



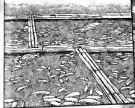
Nothing
anybody...

...could
have
done...



When
some-
thing like
this hap-
pens...

...there's
nothing
anybody
could have
done to
help.



Even
if we
ran...

nothing
would
save us
from
this!



What a
thing to
happen...





Well...
I'll be going.



Could it be...

...that the disaster hasn't over yet?



The red tide has receded, but they aren't going back to sea.

That's strange



But it looks like that's the end of the fish farm, huh...

That's true...

I guess. All we can do is start from scratch by diving again.



Yeah...

Well, the red tide is finally receding.



If only...

...you heard the voices of more people. I think it would solve the problem.



Your voice hasn't back yet?

Hmm...





But in the end, for the village...

...not a single person was sacrificed.

おん
の
み
み
み



After that...



...on the nearby beach...

...they'd see the corpse of a seabird who they supposed had eaten a shellfish.

OF course you can!

Yes...!



If we sell it, and split the price among everyone...

...it won't amount to much, but it should provide until everyone gets on their feet.

It's a pearl that Nimi found.



It's better than sacrificing the village, right?

...it's too fine an object...

But...



...would like to impose on the village again.

...my daughter and I...

And in exchange...





What?
What's that smell?

Hm...?



What did you see back there?

Hm...?

Oh, nothing.



Ah!
I'm coming!

Nami-chen!

Hurry up!

The Chirping Shell
The End





No...

He was empty-handed.

Hey...



That sweet smell is gone.

I wonder...

...what that was...



You're a person.

...
Pww!

A man...?



What was that guy?

A hunter...?



Oh, well...

I'll let you go then.



My body's relaxing...



The Hand That Pets the Night

















You're nothing more than another part of the mountain.



Besides, I could walk this mountain with my eyes closed.

I can't get close enough to the animals holding a lantern.



Are you trying to become the master of the mountain or something?



There aren't any animals who'd attack me.

The moonlight will be enough light.



Not even the most fearsome beast on the mountain knows.



Nobody knows how they're going to lose their life.



Until then, try not to hurt down any more people by accident, okay?



Thank you.

So I'll go to get enough for both of you.

It should take me about a month before I'm back here.



Yeah.

Do you always wait until the sun goes down before you hunt?



Sorry about that.

.....
You're not the person I met last night, are you?



Then at least take a lantern with you. It's dark, and you could make mistakes out there, right?



There are more prey animals wandering around at night.

The only ones out in the day are birds without good night vision.

And little birds make for boring hunting.





The medicine...

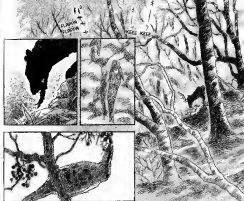
Yeah, I've got it.



Come with me!



I should have expected it. It's night-fall...







Father had...

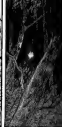


... vanished completely.











Here...
I'll wait
here until
morn-
ing...

I
can't...
move
my
arm!
If I don't
think of
something,
some animal
is going to
get me!



I never
realized...

...how long
the night is.



Dam-
nit...



What
were you
shooting
at?!



I think
I hit a
bear...
Some big
shadow
fell out
there.



It's
Fuki...



It's
Fuki...



I'm over
here,
Usuke!



TERRIFYING



TERRIFYING



Tell
you're...

Py

Or how...

...scary the
darkness
is...





It was...
bird
food?



They
don't
come
closer...
...because
of the
eye-shaped
mark. That's
probably why
you never
caught
them.

Even when
they're
entranced
by the
fruity
smell...



...in the
birds' view,
your arm
became
a sweet,
delicious
meal.

But
when the
mark was
covered in
blood...



And I
haven't
coughed up
any blood
in a long
time!

It sure
is!

It looks
like the
Kiki
worked!!



Tell me...

...your
fever
is way
down!



I'm also
learning how
to hunt!

So, Tabu,
get better
quick so we
can hunt
together!



...color is
looking a
lot better.

You...



カラ
ワカ
ル



Many
animals,
and
especially
birds...

...are
afraid of
the image
of an eye.



...do
I lack my
arm like
that?

why did
all those
birds...

In the
darkness...

...glaring would
be brightest by
contrast.



...glaring and
flashing in the
darkness are the
effect of the
odds.

The
only
rest.



No. 1,
About
Tanaka
(former
name).

This volume has
a lot of bonus
pages, so I
thought I'd talk
about various
things on my
mind.



Recently
I've
discovered
just how
delicious
tea is.



Maybe it's
because I was
raised in a
place like this,
but when I see
Tanaka, I feel
more at ease.



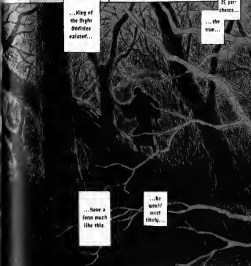
When
going
down
windy
mountain
side...



...King of
the Night
Defines
existed...

Of per-
chance...

... the
now...



...have a
fun much
like this.

...he
would
not
likely...

If I ever get the chance to go, I think I could spend a whole day looking at them and not get bored!

Some mountains have become terraces.

They say that the terraces in the Philippines are a World Heritage site.

I hear they're really difficult to maintain.

Butter can farm animals. Farm machinery can't get up the steep slopes of the terraces.

Security, from what I've seen, may of the terraces have to follow.

By the way, on the edges of rice fields and other types of farmland, there are these constructions. One of the things that I enjoy is looking who built them.

At the top refers to its natural state, and the sharp angles soften...

...it makes for a somewhat sad but many-layered view.

Small work house (aren't they great?)

Shaped

is probably an even tougher job than I can imagine!

Cutting trees, shaping the mountain, securing a water supply and making terraces.

And for some reason, I'll feel this intense excitement!

Amazing! Wow!!!

The people who farmed this land must have worked hard to carve even just a little bit more farmland from the unforgiving earth. And in doing so, they created an indescribable beauty.

Especially when I see terraces made into steep inclines, I get all warm inside.

Each terrace is extremely rich.

I just love these big patches of soil that they refused to let go of.

...the mountains will unexpectedly open up, and a view like this will stretch out in front of me.

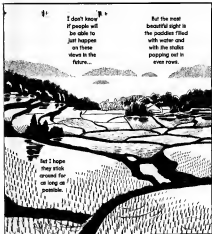
Say...

Toxi...



I don't know
if people will
be able to
just happen
on these
views in the
future...

But the most
beautiful sight is
the paddies filled
with water and
with the stalks
popping out in
even rows.



But I hope
they stick
around for
as long as
possible.

Hmm...

It'd do
better if
it fell on
the land
instead.

Snowflakes
don't get to
decide where
they're going
to fall.



Hm?

It melts
and
becomes
lake
water.

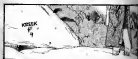
What
happens to
snow when
it falls on
the lake?





Under the Snow







But to me, that's just what happens here naturally.

I never thought of it as "interesting."



Who-

What are you doing, sir?



Excuse me, sir?

The baths are ready for...



Ah/ Sorry.

I guess it's time to take a break.



We don't get guests at this time of year!

No, thank you!



Thanks! You're a lifesaver.



A person would have to be obsessed to brave all this snow to get here.

I guess that's true.

I was chilled through to the bone!



What...? You think so?

It's true that we have a lot of snow here...



The snow around here is very interesting.

I wanted to see various samples of it before moving on.



I see. And what might your obsession be?



It likes to live in animal footprints.

For example, this one is called Yuki-noroshi.



There are things like this inside snow...?

Yeah.

I just gathered snow from around the village, and this is what I found.

This area has an especially wide variety.



That's Yuki-dango-mushi.

So what's this one?



It's a real problem for hunters and rescue parties.

If a lot of them live in one place, the footprints have been known to disappear.



I saw some of it on the way here.

They roll on top of the snow making snowballs, and that's how they go from place to place.



Ah!



Do you mind if I look?

Wow! Look!

They're snowflakes, right?

Sure.



Then I'll close the doors for you.



They're a close of things called Yuki-mushi.

If you unravel a snowflake, sometimes you'll find them inside.



Hey...

There sure are a lot of shapes, huh?



... Are these snowflakes too?





...I noticed...





On the other hand, I don't feel the cold at all.



...It hurts as though my skin is burning.

If it gets too warm...

Sorry that it's not warmer.



Interesting.
Since when?



Since that day, I guess...



...

It was...

...a windless snowy evening.



Who's that?



Nothing that I know of.

Are you sure nothing's wrong?

Your face is getting whiter and whiter!



He said that he wanted to talk to you.

He's Ginko-san. A mushishi.



... Come in.

Hmm?



It's cold in here.





...the snow...

As the snow...

...felt like
it had gone
right inside
my body.



Sachi!



Sachi?



It's hot!

Er...P



Tok...

...you'll freeze
out there.
Come
back in!



Don't! Tok...



So I
opened the
door.

At this
moment...

...I was
sure my sister
had come back.
The one who fell
in the lake.





You should be looking after yourself better!

You're acting really weird!



You've been in a daze recently.

Take care, okay?



Quit following me, it's dangerous out here!

Take your own advice!



Wait a second, Tokki!



Tokki!

I have to go catch some fish.



I'm sorry.

It's okay.

I wonder what we can do to make him want to get cured?

It's stopped snowing.



KUREN
キレン

KUREN
キレン







There's no way we can go into the water now.



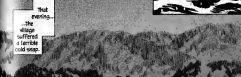
And the sun's down already.

That area is too deep to dive into.



Toki...







The lake
ice...

...is con-
tricting under the
cold and developing
features.



I should
never have
let him
go out on
the lake
alone...!



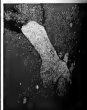
I should
have
stopped
him...















I'm
so cold,
I can't
stand
it...!!



I'm
cold...



...but
by the
time Toki
arrived
at the
village...
he had
returned
to
normal.

Perhaps
it's
because
Tae warmed
him with
what little
warmth she
had left...



When I came to...

...the snow was covering me like a heavy comforter.



That snow...

I protected me.



Like something out of a dream.

The view...

It was beautiful...



But it wasn't a dream.



And the snow that had constantly fallen around him...

...had at some point...

...stopped.



Even so, it was a miracle that he came out the other side alive.

But Toki's were pretty bad. He lost several of his fingers and toes.



Both of them had succumbed to frostbite.

Toki's symptoms were light.



...winter is still just starting.

In this village...



Okay.

I know.

You should too!

Take special care until spring.



It's a land where white snow blankets the ground for the better part of the year...



Let's go.



...there are small ever find in the water or seab.

There are more old things found in the sea.



Do you really have to go?

Yes.

If I stay here any longer, I won't be able to leave again until spring.

Really...?

Then take care of yourself!

Yeah.



No. 2,
About
Traveling

For Ginko,
traveling is an
everyday way
of life.

But I wanted to
go someplace
different than
the place I see
every day, so I
went traveling.

Still, I
wonder
where the
cost I wear
in summer has
gone to.

All I have is
in one trunk,
but I can go
wherever I
want.

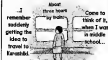


Hurry,
get inside
and warm
up!

Toki!

Right.

On top
of the
snow...



I
remember
suddenly
getting the
idea to
travel to
Karakida.

About
three hours
by train.

Come to
think of it,
when I was
in middle
school...

But, on
the whole,
I like
traveling
alone.

Depending
on the place,
sometimes it's
more fun to
travel with a
group.

A trip to
Karakida that
was planned
by some of my
friends who
helped out as
assistants...

It was
waited
away by a
typhoon.

Don't
forget!



I roomed
about the
streets lined
with old-style
houses,
and I recall
going home
satisfied.



And later,
I could recall
everything.
I loved the
intensity of the
atmosphere.

The trip to
Karakida
that I
went
about last
winter was
like that.



Whenever I
go to a new
place, I try
to get the
most out of it
that I can.



...write
the
story...

As lonely as the night was, the clear morning was just as joyous. Those differences in feelings are one of the best parts of traveling alone.



Once, I took a different trip that seemed like traveling to another world.

There was an impression of warmth that was very different from the first time.

Later, I went with a number of people (odishi) to Shirakawa-gō during winter time.



Low mountain

The entrance looked tiny, cheerless and rustic, and we were suddenly overcome with an uneasy feeling.

I heard that there were some caves near the town of Yachi in Hokkaido.





When my father got drunk, he'd often tell this story.

It was years ago...

One night, I was coming home from a neighboring village, and I lost my way.





...I was
hit by an
indescribably
sweet-
smelling
scent of
saké!

When
I got
close...




The
drink...



And
suddenly I
was struck
with the de-
sire for just
a taste of
that saké!

So I
snuck
quietly
into the
banquet.

...was
golden
and
wrapped
in light.



Banquet in the Farthest Field







I've told you about that!

The "light saké," remember?



It doesn't compare to that saké!

But...

Not yet.



"That saké"?



Saké is a living thing.

If you use all of your senses and listen to what the saké tells you...

...it will give you the answers.



I can't get the memory of the taste out of my mind, even today!

I've always strived to come up to that standard.



...probably ran afoul of something out of the mountain.



You...



Really?

It's true!



Yeah!

It was as though I was always surrounded by something that I couldn't see... And before I knew it, there was less saké in the bucket...



I'm happy it takes the saké that we made this year!

I'm sure whatever it was loves good saké!











Aki!

Hey, you!



Aki...

Aki, don't be that way!

It's your fault for running out of Kôki!

That's not playing fair!



If you don't want tobacco, then I've got lots of other things!



You're being pretty stingy!

It looks like you've got a heavy load of it too!

No...

This is...



Yeah, I'm talking to you!

You've got Kôki in there, right? Share a little, will you?



Yo, Ginko!

I've got some really good munshi-tobacco with me!



Please!

Just a drop will do!

To tell the truth, I hardly have any left either.



Hehehe!

Then I'll trade it for all the tobacco you have.



I'll trade it for some Kôki!

Why? Did you run out of your own?



Come to think of it...

Nobody else is drinking that glowing saké either.

Then what is it used for?



... isn't he going to drink it?

Thanks!

Sure.



Really?

Preparations?

They're probably caught up in the preparations.



I'd better go check on them.



Yeah.

But...

...the Watarai are later!



They say that it's a famous piece.

A long time ago, I traded a cup of Kôki for it.



This cup...

I've seen it somewhere before...

Here? That's what you want?



Then you'd give this to me...?



And after the sale it goes from a quality item to rubbish again.

You have a good eye for quality items, brother!



Father...!

Father used to drink from this cup...!



Then it's yours!

As long as you're trading it for Kôki...

Yes!





Something new
is happening?



...it'll return
when it
regains its
strength.



No.
It's only
buried
itself deep
under-
ground.



I see
that...



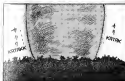
So it
happened
again?
It's gotten
hard to
find the
Kōki's
arte?



It's
reached
its life
span?

You
could
say that.
It's an
old flow.
We may
have to
get our
Kōki
from a
different
light flow
next time.







Are they saying I did something wrong?

What the hell?

Grab him!!



Hey!!

Wait!!

He's the one who brought the fake stuff here!!



I-it was him!!

It wasn't me!!

No way!!

N-



You think maybe...
...It's a fake?

I bought it from him!!



It's the sake
we made in
our brewery
this year.



A
brewer?

Then that
sake is...



I'm
hoping
you
could
just let
me be.

I wanted my
sick father to
have a taste of
it, so I was on
my way home
to bring him
some.

But I lost my
way and got
mixed up with
you guys.



I've
worked
for years...

...testing and
changing
recipes, and I
finally came up
with this!



How...

...did you
finally
make the
stuff?



.....



Ah!



I'm
going
to have
to...
...get
off the
mountain
quick!



Then
you...

...aren't a
murkink?



I didn't
mean to do
anything
bad!

I
just...

...wanted a
drink of that
glowing sake
you guys
had.



Hey!!

Wait a
second!

W—

He's
over—



No...

I work in
a brewery in
the village
down the
hill.



I apologize
for entering
your group
pretending
to be one of
you...

...but...



It had a golden-colored glow.

And it was delicious!



Then I grew some cultures and used them.

But for the most part, I didn't see any change.



...there was one catch...

However...



I only drank a little, so I don't know...

I saw things that looked like red and black hairs.

...but the way I got drunk was a little odd.



From flower nectar...



That said...

...when you drank it, was there anything unusual about it?



But a guy can't gain my father's experience over just a few years.

I tried to do everything exactly as Father instructed me to do...



Then, one day I was thinking...

...what would happen if I changed to a different yeast?



Still, I didn't want our brewery's reputation to suffer...

I changed the rice, and changed the water... I did everything I could, but it was no good.



...and since then, the quality of sake at our brewery has lessened.

My father was the master brewer, but he became sickly...



...I gathered up yeast that feeds on flower nectar.

Since I knew that yeast eats sugar...



I thought maybe I'd try some wild yeast.

We'd always used yeast that we had stored at the brewery.

...I doubt it will do your reputation any good.

I mean, it doesn't matter how good it tastes. If it causes hallucinations...



If it got distributed, you'd see all kinds of panic breaking out.

If a person gets drunk on that sake, they start seeing mushi.



I guess this just proves your abilities as a brewer, huh?

They're a tiny mushi that, like yeast, eat sugars and can help fermentation.



I've heard theories that they can be used to create counterfeit Kôki...

...but I've never heard of anyone succeeding.



Probably...

...Instead of yeast, what you used was a mushi called *Suibishu-tô*.



Mushishi use them as guides to mushishi gatherings.

There are a lot of mushi that like alcohol, but these only nest in Kôki, and they're drawn back to it.



Those weren't hallucinations.

They're mushi called *Shôjo-mo-hige*.



Fine then.

I believe your story.



So your sack fooled them too.



Yes, but in exchange...

Then you'll let me go?

That's pretty impressive.



You have to promise not to sell that sake to the public.



When I asked
that you not
distribute it,
I was talking
about selling
it openly.



By
the
way...

Huh?

That
saké you
made...



.....
Eh..?

The
next
day..

...when I
went back
to the
brewery..
...the
brewers and
the boss were
all in a panic.
They got drunk
and all had
hallucinations.



This Kôki...
What is it?

Can I
ask a
question?



It's the
ultimate
spaces
for mushi-
caused
sicknesses

It's
what the
essence of
life looks
like.



Well..

...it's one
group of
things that
make up the
world.

And
mushi...?



Nothing
more,
nothing
less.



When a person is able to see the invisible...

...then it will be very useful in explaining things.



What do you mean, "openly"?

After
that...

...I never
saw those
people
on the
mountain
again.

During
those
times...

...I'd drink
just a little
of that
leftover
saké.

...when we
can't make
a good
batch of
saké even if
our lives
depend on
it.

And
there
are
times...

That one
batch of
saké is
pretty
much gone.

...to hear
what the
saké tells
me.

Well?

Did you get
a chance to
drink it?

NO...

I don't feel
very proud
of taking
their saké
the way I
did.

And
I'm
going
to...

...listen
closely...

It's all
right.

Now that's
a shame.

...with
that
taste
as my
ultimate
goal.

So I'm
going to
start from
scratch, and
brew my saké
as best as I
can...

...remember
the taste
of the saké
that you
used to
make.

Afterword

Every previous volume of this manga appeared in the autumn, but this time it's coming out during the rainy season.

«Deadish Thread» This is a story I thought of when reflecting on folk tales my grandmother told me. Tales about how missing people were left upon a huge rock. There are similar folk tales all over, but most of them involve finding people in trees or on rooftops. They were usually blamed on Tengu or other spirits who abduct people.

«The Chirping Shell» This story came from a time when I mused that it would be interesting if you didn't hear the ocean in a shell but rather a different sound. But I'd hate it if that sound was a human voice.

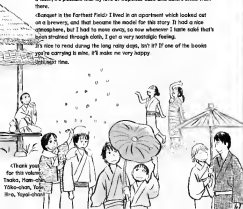
«The Hand That Pets the Night» A long time ago, I saw a snake hunt down a frog. The frog should have easily seen the snake coming, but it didn't run away. I thought it over several ways: "Maybe the idea that snakes hypnotize frogs isn't just a old wives' tale. Maybe the frog is so scared, it can't move..." Or maybe the frog realized that running away was useless.

«Under the Stars» A bedtime story I really loved as a child was "The Snow Queen." Maybe that was an influence. Even today I love stories about children and snow. I reread it recently. The boy main character was such a loser, it's possible that my love of hopeless-case characters stems from there.

«Banquet in the Farthest Field» I lived in an apartment which looked out on a brewery, and that became the model for this story. I had a nice atmosphere, but I had to move away, so now whenever I come back that's been strained through cloth, I get a very nostalgic feeling.

It's nice to read during the long rainy days, isn't it? If one of the books you're carrying is mine, it'll make me very happy.

Autumn time.



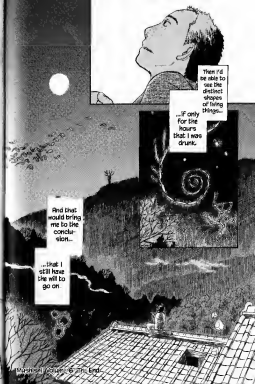
«Thank you for this volume»
Tadako, Haru-chen,
Yoko-chen, Yoko-
kun, Yoko-chen



...if only for the hours that I was drunk.

And that would bring me to the conclusion...

...that I still have the will to go on.



Mustn't forget to bring the End.



Broom star, page 8

One of the words for comet in Japanese is *hōkiboshi*, or "broom star." It is probably an older word and describes the long tail, which looks a little like a Japanese-style broom. Since Fuki obviously didn't know much about astronomy, it seemed more appropriate for her character and the time period to use the literal translation of *hōkiboshi* rather than the more scientific-sounding equivalent.

Tenpengusa, page 28

As in previous volumes, the names for the *mushi* in this volume come either from the look of the *mushi* or the effect it has on humans and the world. The name for this *mushi* comes from the Japanese word *tenpen*, which means heaven, and *kusa*, which means grass.

Nami and Shima, page 60

The names of the two little girls are both maritime related. Nami means waves, and Shima means island.



Translation Notes

Japanese is a tricky language for most Westerners, and translation is often more an art than a science. For your edification and reading pleasure, here are notes on some of the places where we could have gone in a different direction, or where a Japanese cultural difference is used.

General notes on *mushi* and *mushishi*

The *kanji* for *mushi* is made up of three *kanji* meaning bug (also called *mushi*) put together. The *kanji* can be used interchangeably to mean insect, but they can easily take on other meanings. In CLAMP's xoxotic, the *kanji* was introduced as the name for a type of magical vermin.

Mushishi can be translated as "mushi master." Ginko is a man who made a study of *mushi* and seems to have learned to control some through his own senses and others through medicines, remedies, or just a knowledge of their nature. Ginko probably learned his craft from other older *mushishi* who wander Japan.



Fuki, page 3

The name Fuki is represented by the *kanji* meaning to blow, as in the wind. An apt name, considering the events of the story.

Guns, page 128

Many romantic movies involving Japanese feudal times—such as the film *The Last Samurai*—tend to avoid showing guns, preferring swordfights. By watching such films, one may get the idea that guns were scarce and shunned in feudal Japan, but that is not historically accurate.

Histories record that a Chinese sloop carrying Portuguese nationals shipwrecked on the island of Tanegashima in 1543. Two of their rifles were purchased by the local lord, Tanegashima Tokitaka, and he soon had a blacksmith replicate them. Thereafter, rifles were called tanegashima in Japan, and they became very popular. Prior to 1600, there were even several martial arts schools for gunmanship: the Yasumi School and the Inatomi School, among others. Guns played a large role in all of the major battles from the end of the warring states period on. The Japanese made full use of guns on both sides of the historical conflict depicted in *The Last Samurai*.



Tanada, page 139

According to reports, about 70 percent of Japan's landmass can be described as hilly or mountainous. So it is only natural that as much of that land as possible has been converted to producing crops. Tanada (the terraced farms) account for nearly 8 percent of Japanese farmland. The Japanese government, realizing the cultural significance of tanada, has enacted some programs (such as a top-100 best tanada list to promote tourism) to help protect them, but only time will tell how effective these programs can be.



Yukimushi, page 130

This is the class of mushi that are found in and around snow. The word yuki means snow, so the word is rather straightforward.



Song in the shell, page 62

One of the kanji used for the English word song has two parts that can be read as kanji in themselves. One part is the kanji for mouth and the other for shell. Oddly appropriate for this story.

Yado-karidori and Sezuri-kai, page 62

The name Yado-karidori is a pun. The hermit crab is called yadokari in Japanese, but karidori means to reap. So the name would translate out to "hermit reaper." Sezuri-kai would simply mean "chirping shell."

Red tide, page 83

The red tide is a sudden upsurge in poisonous algae such that the dumps of algae (also called a bloom) can be seen by the human eye. The poison kills lower animals in the food chain, and eating the poisoned fish and other seafood can kill animals higher in the food chain such as larger fish, aquatic mammals, seabirds, and humans. "Red tide" is a misnomer, since only a few of the poisonous algae are red and the tide really has nothing to do with the occurrence. Red tides may recede within days, but some have been reported to stay in one area for up to eighteen months.



Fuki, page 107

Unlike the heroine's name from the first story in this volume, this Fuki is made up of two characters: fu, which means to rot, and ki, which means liquor. Ki is the same final kanji character in the "light liquor" from the first Mushishi story, Kôka.

Shôjô-no-hige, page 230

Shôjô-no-hige comes from the words shôjô, one meaning of which is drunk (note that this is a different word from the popular manga term meaning young girl), and hige, which refers to human whiskers such as a beard or mustache. The name would translate out to a phrase meaning "drunk's beard."

Suimitsu-tô, page 231

Mitsu means nectar, tô means sugar, and su means to inhale or suck. So this mushi would have a name something like "nectar sugar sucker."

Rainy season, page 239

Although the actual dates vary year by year, the rainy season generally starts in June and runs through early July. During this period it is likely to rain every day, and one should not be out without one's umbrella.

Tengu, page 239

Tengu are traditional Japanese spirits. There are several Tengu types. Daitegu are the red-faced, long-nosed goblins that one may see in prints and wooden sculptures. Kurama Tengu are master swordsmen and tricksters associated with Kurama Yama (Horse-saddle Mountain) and the Buddhist temple there. And Korosu Tengu (Crow Tengu) are servants to magical masters.

Yuki-norashi, page 151

As said in the note above, yuki means snow, and the verb norasu [from which one may get the noun norashi] means to even out—as in leveling bumps and pits to form a smooth surface.



Yuki-dongo-mushi, page 151

As noted above, yuki means snow, and dongo, aside from being a tasty snack, is also a word used for different kind of balls (such as niku-dongo, which means meatballs). Although a different word is used for the type of snowballs that children play with, Yuki-dongo-mushi could be translated to "snowball mushi."

Tokoyuki-mushi, page 153

The first part of this mushi's name, toko, means endless. As mentioned previously, yuki means snow, so this mushi's name would mean "never-ending snow mushi."